DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 225 468 HE 015 826

AUTHOR Gamson, Zelda F.; And Others
TITLE From Predisposition to Reassessment: Stages in the Responses of Colleges and Universities to Increased Black Enrollment.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 22p.; This paper was identified by a joint project of the Institute on Desegregation at North Carolina Central University and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University. Paper presented at the National Conference on Desegregation in Higher Education (Raleigh, NC, July 19, 1979).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; Affirmative Action; Ancillary School Services; *Black Students; *College Desegregation; College Environment; Compliance (Legal); Conflict Resolution; *Enrollment Trends; Higher Education; Program Evaluation; Racial Attitudes; *Racial Relations; *Self Evaluation (Groups); Student College Relationship; Student Needs; *Student Recruitment

ABSTRACT

The dynamics of responses of white colleges to increased black enrollment were investigated during 1974 and 1975. Interracial teams first undertook field work at 13 colleges and universities that experienced a substantial increase in black enrollments between 1968 and 1972, and students, faculty, and administrators at 4 of the 13 institutions were then surveyed. The sample included: four small, private colleges (Lewis University and Bradley University in Illinois, Carleton College and Macalester College in Minnesota); two large, private universities (Northwestern University in Illinois and a school that wished to remain anonymous); four small, public institutions (Clarion State College and California State College in Pennsylvania, the University of Missouri, Kansas City, and State University of New York, Brockport); and three large public universities (Bowling Green State University, Ohio, and two colleges that wished to remain anonymous). Attention is directed to: predisposing internal and external forces; active recruitment of blacks; conflict during the transition; active accommodation for black students through development of programs and support; and reassessment. None of the 13 institutions had full institutionalization (i.e., legitimated review procedures and high institutional priority on black programs), although more than half seemed to be approaching partial institutionalization (i.e., no legitimated procedures but high priority on black programs). (SW)

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FROM PREDISPOSITION TO REASSESSMENT: STAGES IN THE RESPONSES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO INCREASED BLACK ENROLLMENT*

by

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*The panel presentation by Dr. Zelda F. Gamson at the National Conference on Desegregation in Higher Education, Raleigh, North Carolina, July 19, 1979 was from this paper, which will be published in the Journal of Higher Education in 1980 by the Ohio State University Press. Used with permission.

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This paper has been identified by a joint project of The Institute on Desegregation at North Carolina Central University and ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at George Washington University. The purposes of this project are to identify, collect, and make available literature concerned with

(1) the problems of minority students in higher education in general and
(2) the problems of desegregation in historically black colleges and universities in particular.

New published and unpublished materials are reviewed and recommended by participants of the Institute on Desegratation's Interinstitutional Research Group (ID/IRG) for acquisition by ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. An annual bibliography of this material will be published under the names of ERIC and the Institute.

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1. The Study in Context

In the broadest terms, the study on which this paper is based addresses the question of the responsiveness of colleges and universities to a particular clientele group--black students. The study traces the implications of the impact of black students for other new clientele groups--other minorities, women, adult students--and for other external pressures on colleges and universities. This is a crucial question for understanding, in a fundamental way, the relations between institutions of higher learning and the larger society.

For the most part, black students who attended predominantly white colleges and universities before 1967 entered gradually enough so that they could be accommodated without strain. This situation changed dramatically after 1967, when black enrollments increased sharply. In a companion research project, Arce has assembled the best available data on black enrollments in white colleges and universities from 1946 to 1974 [1].

Arce's study documents the fact that by 1968, the baseline year for our study, black students were attending white institutions in increasing numbers. Many studies have been made of the economic and educational backgrounds of black students, of their aspirations, and of their responses to being in predominantly white institutions.[1] But little is known systematically about the responses of institutions to them. The time is ripe for a close examination of what happened in white colleges and universities

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after the largest influx of black students between 1968 and 1972.

In the book reporting our overall findings [4], we look in detail at the environmental forces which supported and resisted the increased black enrollments, as well as the institutional factors predisposing them to change enrollment patterns. We document the events which led to dramatic shifts in black enrollments and initial responses to blacks. We describe the development of academic and supportive services. In this and other areas, we examine the role of students, black and white, in the early black enrollment increases and in ensuing conflicts over responses to that increase. We focus appreciable attention on the impact of blacks on administrative roles and governance patterns. Key roles played by black and white administrators are analyzed, as are affirmative action efforts and the activities of other minority groups.

In this paper, we examine the dynamics of response to increased black enrollments. We present a five-stage account of institutional experiences with black students which identifies the issues and response strategies that were crucial at each of the stages. We then discuss the implications of our findings for future response strategies.

2. Design

The study was conducted in two phases, during 1974 and 1975. In the first phase, interracial teams did field work at 13 colleges and universities, selected because they had experienced a substantial increase in black enrollments between 1968 and 1972. The second phase selected four of the 13 institutions for surveys of students, faculty and administrators.

Fiscal realities confined our geographic coverage to the upper Midwest. While we went as far east and west as we could, we did not reach New England or west of Minnesota and Iowa. We do not believe unsampled areas had experiences that were dependent upon geography, although institutions in the South could well have been quite different from any we encountered. Our study does not include their experiences.

A second kind of restriction stems from the research question itself. We were interested in institutions where the possible impact would be

greatest. Therefore, we selected institutions in which the black enrollment increase took place rapidly and reached a fairly high level. At the same time absolute numbers were important, for if there were only a handful of blacks, adding a few more could produce a large percentage increase even though the total number would still be small. At the other extreme, if the institution had had a significant number of blacks for a while it would be more likely to have made accommodations already and would be less likely to make new ones even if the number increased appreciably. Our solution to the instances of extremes was to eliminate those colleges and universities which had fewer than 50 blacks or more than 3% in 1968. We then arbitrarily defined a "significant" increase as at least a doubling of the percentage of blacks from 1968 to 1972.

American Council on Education data from Alexander Astin and Office of Civil Rights reports were used to identify institutions meeting the enrollment criteria. On the basis of the best information we could obtain on type of control, selectivity, size and type of program response, we invited 14 colleges and universities to participate in our study. Thirteen of the fourteen accepted. We initially told the participating institutions that they would remain anonymous in any reports we wrote but later thought better of this when it became clear that institutional identification would make our findings more comprehensible to readers. Ten of the 13 agreed to release their names. Two of the three institutions, all universities, that wished to remain anonymous were selected for the survey phase; we have assigned them pseudonyms. Table 1 lists the 13 institutions by name or pseudonym, according to size, control, and selectivity.

Our list includes six highly selective schools and seven less selective ones. Four are small private colleges (Lewis University and Bradley University in Illinois, Carleton College and Macalester College in Minnesota). Two are large private universities, "Metropolitan," located in a Midwestern city, and Northwestern University. Four are small public institutions (Clarion State and California State, both in the Pennsylvania state system, the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and SUNY-Brockport).

And finally, we included three large public universities (Bowling Green State University in Ohio and two pseudonyms, well-known universities, "University of the City," in a major industrial city in the East and "State University," in a Midwestern college town).

We turn now to the dynamics of institutional response to increased black enrollment through five stages: (1) predisposing conditions; (2) precipitating events; (3) transitional trauma; (4) active accommodation; and (5) reassessment.

Stage 1: Predisposing Conditions

During the period 1968-1975, the 13 institutions in this study were experiencing changes which influenced their ability to respond to larger social issues. Governance changes, shifts in direction or purpose, and leadership patterns were often intertwined. The shift from private to public status and a more local orientation reinforced University of Missouri - Kansas City's and University of the City's ability to respond to black populations in their regions. Secularization and redirection of mission moved Lewis and Metropolitan to new clienteles, including blacks. An expanded service region and the broadening of educational programs at former state teachers colleges like Clarion, California, Brockport, and Bowling Green made them more capable of responding to the needs of blacks. Northwestern University, University of the City, and Macalester College appointed presidents who were early proponents of a commitment to minorities.

Enrollment declines were experienced by several institutions. At Bradley and Lewis, which suffered early declines, the resulting financial exigencies led them to refocus their goals and to expand recruitment efforts, which helped to increase black enrollments.

It is obvious that all 13 institutions had experienced a variety of predisposing internal and external forces, prior to increasing their black enrollments. On the whole, the environments of these colleges and universities at this early stage were more supportive than resistive. In at least three cases, legal mandates played a substantial role in influencing the decision to recruit more black students. The only initial resistive factors were geographical and demographic--isolation and lack

of a nearby black population. Had our sample included institutions that did not increase black enrollments so dramatically, we might have found more negative environmental factors.

The supportive factors in the contexts of the 13 institutions continued to be important through all the phases of response to black students, but they were most powerful at the very beginning. In a basically supportive environment, the institutions could increase black enrollments on their own terms. Numerous internal activities paved the way: Early civil rights activities, strong administrative support of black concerns, a few active black students and faculty, and occasional programs and activities oriented toward minorities served to sensitize white students, faculty, and administrators to the issues of civil rights and racial equality.

Strategic responses at the early stages depended heavily on institutional leadership, particularly from the president and other respected faculty or administrators who felt some concern that their institutions respond to civil rights issues in some way. These responses could be either proactive or reactive: some institutions actively sought to redefine and extend their service regions, became involved in changing community housing discrimination patterns (State University), and solicited ideas from community groups (University of the City). Others reacted to legal directives and rushed out to recruit blacks without assessing consequences.

The more prestigious institutions could afford to recruit and compete for the most able black students; the less prestigious competed as far as their resources would take them. Some could draw on prior experience and reputation with blacks. Bradley and State University, through athletic recruitment, and a few others with pre-college programs, had a head start in the competition for both black students and staff.

Stage 2: Precipitating Events

We were able to identify the exact year when 12 of the 13 institutions began to make active attempts to recruit black students. The

decision to recruit and the preparation of a recruiting program typically took one year and, in some cases, even less time. This phase was followed by approximately a year in which the institutions experienced the first major influx of new students and when the first special programs were put into operation.

The impact issues during this early period are easily identified. They seemed to vary with the strength and direction of the external influence and the proactive or reactive strategy of the institution and its leadership in the predisposing period. Whether the decision to initiate the enrollment increase was primarily internal or external seemed to be determined in large part by whether it was voluntary or under the control of the institution. To some extent, the degree of voluntariness reflected the sensitivity and readiness of key leaders in the predisposing period. More importantly, the voluntary nature of the decision seemed to enhance the commitment of the institution to follow through on its implications.

Another important issue at this time was the planned vs. unplanned nature of the response. A planned response was one in which, either initially or within the first year of the black enrollment increase, there was an enrollment target, a comprehensive range of response programs, formal approval of the increase in black enrollments and response programs, and an anticipated evaluation plan.[2] Few institutions initially planned their responses to the influx of blacks; even those that did have a blueprint found that they could not anticipate the consequences of their first efforts.

The level of conflict during the precipitating events stage was relatively low. The initial attempts to increase enrollments of blacks almost all occurred immediately or very shortly after the King assassination when concern about civil rights and racial discrimination was high. In the context of the late 1960's, the decision to recruit more blacks was seen as morally correct. Adroit leadership, early supportive predisposing experiences, and the availability of outside resources paved the way or minimized the significance of the decision. Nascent

internal resistance was neutralized by moral fervor and outside financial support.

Stage 3: Transitional Trauma

This next stage lasted for about two years. It was during this period that black students, and occasionally black staff and faculty, reached a "critical mass" large enough to bring their concerns forcefully to the attention of the institution--usually the president or upper-level administrators.

Aside from the tactics of confrontation and non-negotiable demands, a number of underlying impact issues were being raised by the new black presence. Was there a comprehensive range of response programs to meet black student needs in recruitment and admissions, financial aid, supportive services, academic programming, and cultural and social facilities? What was the adequacy and level of support for these programs? Forming a backdrop to any particular incident of protest was the declining trust and increased racial conflict in many areas of student life, of high black visibility on the campus, and of black control of black programs. Some of these issues continue today, but in the stage of transitional trauma, an understanding of how black needs were to be voiced and heard in the institutional governance structure had not yet crystallized. The period from 1969 to 1971 with its Black Power symbolism was a period of severe conflict and obvious breakdown in black-white relations.

Crucial to this period of conflict was the nature of the relationship between black and white leaders, in particular between the leadership of the major black student organizations and the president of the institution. Conflict during this period was an outgrowth of organized confrontations in which demands, responses, and negotiations were passing through these key individuals. Black leadership needed to show results. The president, usually able to exercise less control over his institution than blacks recognized, could not appear to cave in and yet could not resort to overwhelming force. In confrontations between the two sides, negotiating

skills, respect for the adversary, and an ability to cut through rhetoric and institutional protocol were necessary but difficult. When deadlocks occurred, key leadership occasionally came from black or white faculty or staff members who commanded respect from both sides. Such a combination was unique and crucial during major protests.

During this period, the greatest effects of the presence of larger numbers of blacks were being felt primarily by the administration who were also the key actors in negotiations with black groups. The faculty hovered along the periphery and normal academic decision-making bodies tended to be bypassed. Administrative roles were changed appreciably both by design and necessity. Presidents, student affairs staff, and admissions and financial officers were most affected, the faculty least of all.

The reasons for the disparity are subtle but understandable. The 13 institutions added more minority staff members than they did minority faculty. The presence of new black staff members meant that white administrators had more contact with black administrative colleagues. Our survey at four of the universities indicates that administrators, compared to faculty, view their institutions' responses to and commitments to blacks as more extensive and see the effects of black students on their roles as more demanding--and more positive [2].

Aside from these effects on white administrators, new administrative positions were created and new people hired in old positions with the advent of more black students. Blacks were hired to run new minority and support services programs. Some institutions created a new position or umbrella office concerned with a range of minority affairs. Others invented second or third echelon "assistant to" positions not necessarily designated for minority persons but often filled by them. Another pattern promoted the director of a minority program to a position with a more general title. Finally, five institutions had blacks newly placed in top-level (vice presidential or dean level) positions not explicitly responsible for minority affairs: There were two vice-presidents or deans for student affairs, one vice-president for personnel, an associate provost

and three academic deans. The presence of top-level black administrators with other than minority responsibility was seen by almost everyone as a sign of serious commitment.

Blacks in minority administrative positions faced some serious obstacles in this period. They were typically under-financed or supported by a federal contract with annoying reporting requirements. Active support from white faculty and administrators in related units had to be earned. Many minority program administrators discovered that support had to be sought constantly, particularly as other groups (women, other minorities) began to siphon off support.

Stage 4: Active Accommodation

Once the trauma of major conflicts had subsided, most of the campuses actively began trying to accommodate to their black students by focusing on building the programs with whatever support the institutions provided or could be pressured to provide. White faculty and staff, sometimes eagerly and sometimes grudgingly, accepted the fact that the increase in black enrollments and the related response programs, whether initiated by acceptable or unacceptable means, were on the campus to stay. It was during this period that several new impact issues emerged.

The important issues of this period evolved naturally from the prior period and from the realities of accommodation. White perceptions of the prior period of conflict, blacks' early disappointment with inadequate response, and the growing awareness of the conflicting lifestyles and educational expectations of black and white students brought the issue of trust and acceptance to the fore. During this period whites were suspicious of the motives of blacks and vice versa. In the wake of earlier protests and institutional commitments, it was difficult for whites to ignore the presence of black students. Likewise blacks, having received some recognition, had become to some degree part of the institution and seemed less willing to risk further conflicts. Each group viewed the other from an uneasy, unsettled distance with attitudes that ranged from acceptance to rejection, from trust to mistrust--balancing eventually in the middle

ground of mutual disinterest and begrudging toleration. This attitude was most characteristic of student relations.

The extent to which programs for blacks were intended to be separated from, coordinated with, or integrated with non-minority programs was unclear during the accommodation period. The expectation of formal and informal integration in student relations had been shattered by then. The tendency to start separate black support services, either after initiating the increase in black enrollments or in response to protests, produced strains with existing services and the practice was beginning to be questioned. The early willingness of white faculty and some departments to offer Black Studies courses declined. Black Studies programs began to develop their own orientations and ideologies [5]. In all areas, strains continued as separate black activities and programs developed in the face of integrationist attitudes of whites and demands for coordination between minority and similar non-minority units.

One issue faced by all 13 institutions was the need to increase the number of black faculty. In three, it was not clear that any effort was made to recruit black faculty. In those instances where there were clearly documented recruiting efforts, success was greatest from 1970 to 1972--before affirmative action. The number of black faculty in the 13 schools ran from one to over 200 in 1974-75. Only two had more than 6% black faculty; five had 3-6%; and six had less than 3%. Few of the black faculty held tenure-track appointments in regular departments. Frustration among black faculty was high.

Among white faculty, we found a pervasive ambivalence toward the black students in their midst. The impact of increased black enrollment on individual faculty members, departments, and academic units was limited. Yet when faculty were asked general questions about the impacts of blacks on higher education and about their attitudes toward them, the majority responded in an overwhelmingly positive way. When role-specific attitudes and behaviors were examined, however, there was a distinct shift toward the negative or "no-response" direction. We found the most pessimistic faculty were those who taught the largest numbers of black undergraduates in introductory courses; faculty who taught at the upper levels were more satisfied with their experiences teaching black students [3].

The final measure of institutional commitment came clearly into focus during this period, an issue whose complexities became increasingly and painfully obvious. It implied institutional, programmatic, and interpersonal levels of response and commitment in campus life. Blacks were becoming aware that obtaining political victories guaranteed little beyond admission, financial aid, and some tacit recognition of a black presence. Real commitment had to come from faculty and students as well as from administrators. Whites, on their side, were becoming aware that the emotional responses to civil rights issues or to the tragedy of Martin Luther King's assassination meant that a return to life as usual was impossible. A new group of students, new programs, and the resource demands these implied would affect their lives in expected ways. Thus, the meaning of responsiveness and the nature of the institutions' commitment to blacks began to be debated and understood in a more complex and more realistic way.

Stage 5: Reassessment

This final phase is less continuous with earlier periods and more dependent on conditions facing colleges and universities generally. Ideally, a period of reassessment should have occurred after programs for blacks had an opportunity to mature and to be absorbed into the institutional mainstream. This would provide a fair basis for assessing the patterns of acceptance, of integration or separation of minority programs, and of institutional commitment. The answers to these questions would guide institutionalization of the changes that have occurred.

However, quite often, a reassessment was required before the institution got beyond the stage of precipitating events, for example, when a major donor withdrew his support at one of our schools, or when enrollments began to decline at several others. Premature reassessment became the focus for conflicts which were compounded by the problems typical of the transitional trauma stage. Because of declining resources, many institutions were proposing overall program evaluation, including minority programs--particularly those whose outside funding was running out. Such

a situation raised the question about whether reassessment had further accommodation or institutionalization of the commitment to minorities as its ultimate purpose, or whether it was merely a rationalization for cutbacks. Conflicts in 1974 at Macalester College and at the University of the City, as well as fears at other institutions, suggested that carrying out such reviews was not going to be simple.

Perhaps the foremost issue in a period of retrenchment is the priority of black programs vis-a-vis other programs. In the past, this question was not raised in a comparative sense. In 1968-70, the degree of concern for blacks as a minority group was clearly an issue of foremost priority at the 13 institutions and it could usually be accommodated without denying other institutional priorities. Indeed, at some institutions the outside financial aid which accompanied the new black students was a blessing which kept some other activities afloat. However, in a period of decline, white administrators are not anxious to approach the priority issue directly and do not relish a return to confrontation and conflict. Black staff and students fear the results. Thus, both sides focus on surrogate issues rather than seriously reassessing what has been accomplished and why. Black staff press the issue of appointment status for minority faculty and staff. White administrators experiment with "relocating" Black Studies programs to bring them closer into the mainstream [5].

When immediate pressures for resource review foster a reassessment for which black staff and white administrators are ill-prepared, a myriad of issues reflecting the lack of a legitimate review process emerges. What is to be the order of review? Who is to be represented in this review process? Blacks suggest that faculty from other units who have not always been their enthusiastic supporters are not appropriate. Whites are suspicious of self-reviews or reviews by black groups from other institutions. What data shall be utilized in such reviews? Even if all could agree on the criteria for review, the adequacy, accuracy, and privacy in the use of data introduce further difficulties. The basic,

underlying dilemma centers on whether reassessment will be a rational process or a political process.

Another question concerns the role that other racial and non-racial minority groups will play. Are they to be political allies of the blacks in the review or will they present their own interests? Will they all band together to make each program review an affirmative action issue? This, and the other issues, underline once again the crucial nature of black, white, and other minority group leadership in the reassessment stage.

3. Future Response Strategies: Institutionalization or Retrenchment?

Most of the institutions in our study had no legitimated procedures for program review but were just beginning to recognize that they needed them. They were uncertain what the commitment of the various governing bodies were to minority programs vis-a-vis other programs. Depending on (1) whether or not the institutions develop and gain acceptance for a legitimate program review process and (2) whether or not the institutional leadership still places a high priority on minority programs and commitments, four institutionalization strategies appear to be possible in the current world of scarce and competitive resources (Table 2). Legitimated review procedures and high institutional priority on black programs lead to full institutionalization. No legitimated procedures but high priority lead to partial institutionalization. Low priority combined with legitimated procedures imply retrenchment and low priority with no legitimated review procedures spell termination.

At none of the 13 institutions in our study did we see full institutionalization, although more than half seemed on the way to partial institutionalization. Support for their institutions' commitment to blacks among the administrators, faculty, and students in our surveys at SUNY-Brockport, State University, Metropolitan University, and University of Missouri--Kansas City was strong, and their views of the future surprisingly optimistic [4, Chapter 14]: More than four-fifths believed that their institution would either maintain or increase their support of programs and services for blacks. This was in what we would

call the leading edge of higher education's response to black students in the late 60's and early 70's. Yet these beliefs are probably not unique. They provide latent support for minorities in colleges and universities. While it remains more passive than active, such support could be mobilized by leaders inside and outside of academe. This is as much a reality affecting the future of blacks and other minorities in higher education as shrinking resources and enrollment declines.

Table 1

Institutions In the Study
By Control, Size and Selectivity

Control and Size	Selectivity	
	Lower	Higher
Private		
Small*	Lewis University (Illinois) Bradley University (Illinois)	Carleton College (Minnesota) Macalester College (Minnesota)
Large*	"Metropolitan" University (Midwestern State)	Northwestern University (Illinois)
Public		
Small†	University of Missouri--Kansas City (Missouri)	Clarion‡ (Pennsylvania)
	California State College (Pennsylvania)	State University of New York-Brockport‡ (New York)
Large†	Bowling Green State University (Ohio)	"State University" (Midwestern State)
	"University of the City" (Eastern State)	

* Size classifications were relative to other private institutions.
† Size classifications were relative to other public institutions.
‡ Neither turned out to be selective by 1972.

Table 2

Future Institutional Response Strategies

		Review Process Established	
		Legitimated Procedures	No Legitimated Procedures
Institution's Black Program Priority	High	Full Institutionalization	Partial Institutionalization
	Low	Retrenchment	Termination

Full Institutionalization: There is high black program priority and review procedures are legitimated. Under this condition, there is likely to be further development of black and minority programs and full acceptance of them. One or two of the institutions among the thirteen may have been headed in this direction.

Partial Institutionalization: There is high black program priority but no legitimate review process. Under this strategy the high priority--whether in the perception of administrators, faculty, or black groups--would assure some further development; however, there is little basis for guaranteed continued support especially if important groups (e.g., faculty bodies) do not participate in or concur in further decisions.

Retrenchment: There is low black program priority and a legitimate review process. In this situation, reduced effort in the minority area would most likely result in a tight resource situation. Some conflict is probably inevitable from black and minority groups.

Termination: There is low black program priority and no legitimate review process. In this situation, severe retrenchment and/or termination are possible. Conflict may occur as blacks rally their support in order to prevent termination or reduction to the degree that was expected.

Footnotes

*Revision of a paper presented to the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, March, 1978. The research on which this paper is based was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, Project No. R01 MH 23770.

1. See [4, chapter 1 and bibliography] for selected references to this literature.
2. See [4, chapter 7] for a detailed discussion of the degree of planning involved in initiating programs for blacks in the 13 institutions.

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